

Remarks Following a Tour of Meru District Hospital in Arusha, Tanzania February 18, 2008

Habari zenu. We have just toured the hospital here, which is on the forefront of Tanzania's fight against malaria. I want to thank you, doc, for leading the tour, and thank you for your compassion. I appreciate the commissioner welcoming us to the district. I also want to thank Minister Mwakyusa for joining us here in Arusha. I'm grateful for the members of the diplomatic corps who've joined us.

During the visit at this hospital, we met pregnant women who will receive insecticide-treated bed nets. We witnessed a pediatric ward and observed children being diagnosed and treated. We saw how an historic partnership is saving lives across the continent of Africa.

For years, malaria has been a health crisis in sub-Saharan Africa. The disease keeps sick workers home, schoolyards quiet, and communities in mourning. The suffering caused by malaria is needless, and every death caused by malaria is unacceptable. It is unacceptable to people here in Africa, who see their families devastated and their economies crippled. It is unacceptable to people in the United States, who believe every human life has value and that the power to save lives comes with the moral obligation to use it.

In 2005, I announced that the United States would work to save lives through our malaria initiative. Under this 5-year, \$1.2 billion program, we're working with 15 African countries to cut malaria-related deaths by half.

Our strategy to achieve this goal is straightforward. First, the initiative supports indoor residual spraying to keep deadly mosquitoes at bay. Here in Tanzania, spraying campaigns have reached hundreds of thousands of homes and have protected more than a million people.

Second, the initiative supports treatment for those who are most vulnerable to ma-

laria, especially pregnant women. Here in Tanzania, more than 2,400 health workers have been trained to provide specialized treatment that prevents malaria in expectant mothers.

Third, the initiative provides lifesaving drugs. Here in Tanzania, the program has supported more than 1 million courses of treatment and has trained more than 5,000 health workers in how to use them.

Fourth, the initiative supports the distribution of insecticide-treated bed nets, and Laura and I are about to distribute some of those bed nets. This is one of the simplest technologies imaginable, but it's also one of the most effective. Here in Tanzania, we're working with the Government and partners such as the Global Fund to provide bed net vouchers for infants and pregnant mothers. Women can use these vouchers to buy bed nets at local shops at a huge discount. So far, an estimated 5 million vouchers have been distributed through these programs.

Today I'm pleased to announce new steps in the bed net campaign. Within the next 6 months, the United States and Tanzania, in partnership with the World Bank and the Global Fund, will begin distributing 5.2 million free bed nets. This ambitious nationwide program will provide enough nets to protect every child between the ages of 1 and 5 in Tanzania.

The bed net campaign is supported by Tanzanian manufacturers, including A to Z Textiles, which we will visit later today. So as this campaign protects women and children from malaria, it also boosts—boosts local economies. It helps develop a culture of bed net use that will be sustained long after relief programs have ended.

For the past 2 years, we've applied our strategy here in Tanzania, and we're seeing results. In June 2006, at the district hospital

in Muleba, more than 50 people died because of malaria. In June 2007, after a spraying campaign supported by our malaria initiative, the number of deaths had dropped to five. In Zanzibar, the percentage of infants infected with malaria has dropped from about 20 percent to less than 1 percent.

The campaign to fight malaria has the support of government and private citizens alike. In the United States, schoolchildren have raised money to send bed nets to Africa. Houses of worship have sent their prayers and their faithful, compassionate men and women who travel here to confront the suffering and heal the sick.

Tanzanian citizens are stepping forward. In one area, residents launched a campaign called *Kataa Malaria*; for those who don't speak Swahili, it means "Reject Malaria." [Laughter] As part of the campaign, workers went door to door to teach people how to use bed nets. They launched TV and

radio ads. They spoke in mosques about malaria prevention and treatment. And their efforts are working.

This is a campaign of compassion. This is a practical way to help save lives. It's in the interests of the United States to save lives, and it's in the interests of the Tanzanian Government to put forth an effective strategy. Our interests are combined, and our interests are now making a significant effort.

And so on behalf of the United States of America, we say, God bless you. And to the Tanzanian Government, we say, thank you for your efficient and hard work. And so it's been an honor to be with you. *Asante.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:52 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Aziz Msuya, district medical officer, Meru District Hospital; and Minister of Health and Social Welfare David Homeli Mwakyusa of Tanzania.

Letter to President Fatmir Sejdiu of Kosovo Recognizing Kosovo as an Independent and Sovereign State February 18, 2008

His Excellency
Fatmir Sejdiu
President of Kosovo
Pristina

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the American people, I hereby recognize Kosovo as an independent and sovereign state. I congratulate you and Kosovo's citizens for having taken this important step in your democratic and national development.

On this historic occasion, I note the deep and sincere bonds of friendship that unite our people. This friendship, cemented during Kosovo's darkest hours of tragedy, has grown stronger in the 9 years since war in Kosovo ended. Kosovo has since worked to rebuild its war-shattered society, estab-

lish democratic institutions, hold successful elections for a new government, and foster prosperity. As an independent state, Kosovo now assumes responsibility for its destiny. As in the past, the United States will be your partner and your friend.

In your request to establish diplomatic relations with the United States, you expressed Kosovo's desire to attain the highest standards of democracy and freedom. I fully welcome this sentiment. In particular, I support your embrace of multi-ethnicity as a principle of good governance and your commitment to developing accountable institutions in which all citizens are equal under the law.

I also note that, in its declaration of independence, Kosovo has willingly assumed